

Speaker: Joele Newman

1. Introduction

- a. Good Morning and thank you all for the time today. My name is Joele Newman, and I am a Community Organizer at Peaslee Neighborhood Center. I'm here with 3 other members of our team: Jennifer Arens, our community education and volunteer coordinator, Jennifer Summers, our executive director, and Bonnie Neumeier, our board co-chair and founding mom of Peaslee

2. CAN--Equity

- a. For 36 years, Peaslee has been a community based organization, committed to self expression and social change.
 - i. As a community facing space, our work has been dedicated specifically, to elevating the deep value and wisdom that lives in the social and cultural experiences of our neighbors, especially neighbors that have been marginalized by society.
- b. When we think about the need for affordable housing in our city, to ensure that we are creating a sustainable and inclusive place for all residents to live, solutions that are the most valuable are solutions driven by the lived experiences and expertise of those who have long struggled against oppression.
- c. Cincinnati, as we all know, has a well documented affordable housing crisis where too many neighbors are living outdoors, living in unstable housing conditions, and unable to find housing that they can afford for themselves and their families.
 - i. In order to properly address this crisis, we are in need of comprehensive affordable housing policies for our city.
- d. Over the years, Peaslee has prioritized researching what has been working best in other parts of the country, and the most impactful cities in addressing its communities needs related to affordable housing have implemented legislative policies that prioritize equity specific to the needs of its neighborhoods.
- e. Our city, as well as our entire nation, lives with a legacy of systemic racism and classism that has left entire communities out of opportunities for economic success and has governed the spaces that we live and exist in.
 - i. Discriminatory lending, systematic disinvestment, and social exclusion has lead to a crisis that disproportionately impacts Black people, people of color and people with low incomes in our city.
 - ii. We know that this legacy was created by policy design, and can only be rectified by substantial policy change that is equity focused.
- f. This history and these experiences was the driving force for the creation of the Communities Act Now, or CAN, action platform, which will be the focus of our time with you all today. CAN is an action platform of 4 of the most essential equitable development policies that are specific to the need here in Cincinnati.
 - i. We believe that with the implementation of these critical first steps, Cincinnati can begin down the path of being a more equitable and integrated city for all our neighbors to live.

Communities Act Now

Communities Act Now (CAN) is an action platform for equitable development in Cincinnati. It is made up of four of the most urgently needed policy initiatives in this area:

Affordable Housing Trust Fund

Committing city revenue to real housing solutions

Equitable Development Rubric

Making our public incentives work for the public good

Good Cause Eviction

Protecting residents from unjust displacement

Tax Reform for Public Schools/ Services

Creating transparent tax structures that support our kids and communities

Each initiative is designed to address findings from multiple studies and assessments, and each is anchored in best practices learned from other cities across the country. With the success of these efforts, Cincinnati will take its first critical steps on the path to equitable development.

Here's Why

Cincinnati, like other US cities, lives with a legacy of systemic racism and classism that has governed the spaces in which we exist. Whole communities have been shut out of our city's economic success. Discriminatory lending, predatory real estate practices, systematic disinvestment, biased criminalization, social exclusion, and reckless displacement have done, and continue to do, violence to our neighbors with limited economic resources and to our neighbors of color. **The deep inequalities across our zip codes were created by design, and they must be righted by design.**

Cincinnati will never thrive unless our public policies and practices prioritize our most marginalized residents. To wait for resources to trickle down from the most powerful is neither a real nor a just solution. Lives are threatened every day by our resistance to change. If we allow our City to continue to ignore or delay smart reforms, we will prolong the morally inexcusable inequalities seen in income, wealth, employment, infant mortality, education, life expectancy, health care, and incarceration.

There is ample research to support this platform; no additional data are needed to put any of these pieces in motion. If we are serious about building a fair and inclusive city to call home, we need to rally behind a shared vision with specific and achievable goals, and we need to collectively demand that it moves to the forefront of Cincinnati's policy plans and action. This platform offers us an opportunity to do it!

Speaker: Jenn Arens

- CAN is intentional in pursuing the multi-pronged approach that is necessary for equitable development
- Every city that has gotten smart about equitable development has pursued 3 paths:
 - Dedicating significant, local public revenue for affordable housing and community-oriented development
 - Leveraging public incentives to meet the needs that the market does not meet
 - Regulation that protects against displacement
- Cincinnati lacks all 3, despite grassroots efforts to advance them
 - The **charter amendment for the Affordable Housing Trust Fund**, if passed, will have Cincinnati join the hundreds of other municipalities who have found creative ways to generate revenue for the emergency that is the housing crisis
 - The **Equitable Development Rubric** is designed for use within an inclusionary housing framework. Not all inclusionary housing policies are equally effective in their design. This one is firm but flexible in its application across various projects, it makes Cincinnati's Subsidies-- which are bigger and more freely given than those in the vast majority of other major cities-- work for equity. It also addresses the different geographic needs across the city
 - Because of the impact of tax abatement and TIFs on our public schools and services, the **tax reform** work of Cincinnati's teacher's union and public education advocates is sistered with this effort.
 - **Good Cause Eviction** is a regulatory policy-- used in cities across the country-- to stop the bleeding on housing loss and displacement at the bottom of the economic ladder. Measures that tinker with things like flexibility with security deposits, while helpful, will not have the broad impact we desperately need. Good Cause Eviction, followed by other common sense regulation, will make meaningful gains in stemming displacement.

Comparable Cities

These resources examine policy recommendations for development in cities that are economically comparable to Cincinnati, illuminating that the relevancy of these solutions is not limited to wealthier, coastal cities.



Equitable Development: The Path to an All-In Pittsburgh

By PolicyLink; Neighborhood Allies; Urban Innovation



Detroit Inclusionary Housing Plan and Market Study

By HR&A Advisors, Inc.; Capital Impact Partners; Grounded Solutions Network



What About Housing?: A Policy Toolkit for Inclusive Growth

By Grounded Solutions Network

Research supporting our local trust fund initiative



Opening Doors to Homes for All

By Housing Trust Fund Project

Report on the status of housing trust funds nationwide



Model Approaches to Providing Homes for ELI Households

By Community Change

Analysis of how trust funds have effectively provided housing affordable at the lowest income levels



2019 Advocates' Guide: A Primer

By National Low Income Housing Coalition

Comprehensive guide to affordable housing programs and ways to advocate for and expand them

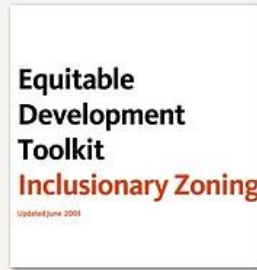
Research supporting inclusionary housing policies and community benefits agreements— two solutions at play within the Equitable Development Rubric framework



Inclusionary Housing

By Grounded Solutions Network

Website dedicated to inclusionary housing policies, including national map and development calculator



Equitable Development Toolkit: Inclusionary Zoning

By PolicyLink

Explanation of how development incentives can be used to create affordable housing



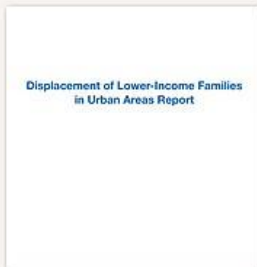
Community Benefits Agreements: Making Development Projects Accountable

By Good Jobs First; California Partnership for Working Families

Handbook for CBAs— agreements between developers and community coalitions on project-based public benefits



Research supporting Good Cause Eviction legislation



Displacement of Lower-Income Families in Urban Area Reports

By U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

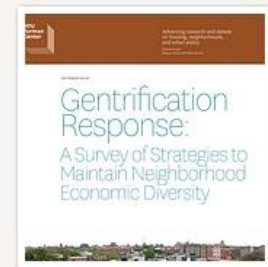
Report on the rise of gentrification and the challenges of community and urban development



Pushed Out: The Hidden Costs of Gentrification

By Institute for Children and Poverty

Analysis of the effects of gentrification, including increased homelessness

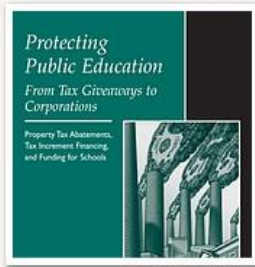


Gentrification Response: A Survey of Strategies

By NYU Furman Center

Overview of approaches to protect against displacement amid rising housing cost

Research supporting our initiative for support of public schools/services via tax reform



Protecting Public Education

By National Education Association

Report assessing the negative impact of massive tax subsidies for development on public schools in the United States



Key Reforms: Protecting Schools from Tax Giveaways

By Good Jobs First

Breakdown of TIF districts and tax abatements, and the negative public impacts of their wide usage



Columbus Property Tax Abatements: Transparency and Accountability

By Policy Matters Ohio

A look at the challenges posed to democracy by tax abatement use in Columbus

Speaker: Bonnie Neumeier

I have almost 50-years of lived experiences here in Over-the-Rhine, housing has always been an issue. Our efforts here in the neighborhood created community-based groups like Peaslee Neighborhood Center, Over-the-Rhine Community Housing, Greater Cincinnati Homeless Coalition, and the ShelterHouse.

What my neighbors have taught me here, primarily Black women with children, they have lived experiences that can teach us much. They have wisdom we all need to listen to. Their insights are deep and helpful because they are the ones living lives of dignity while experiencing racial and economic injustices in our city, making a way out of no way. They have been crying for affordable housing, when will we hear those cries and appropriately respond with real solutions?

As politicians and as community advocates, like myself, it's critical we place the needs of those in the margins in the center of our work. When we do that, we all benefit. We are asking you to govern both with the ethic of care and the ethic of equity.

Our community-based work is an asset, not something you need to fear or resist. We do our homework and research. We've been on the ground building, preserving, and maintaining affordable housing. It's tough, but we keep at it, for we know community-based housing is needed and we work hard to fill the gap in financing so we can have affordable rents.

LISTEN TO THE WISDOM OF THE PEOPLE.

Bonnie Neumeier
Peaslee Co-Chair and Co-Founder
March 16, 2021

Speaker: JenniferSummers

- I wanted to round out this presentation today with some final thoughts for you to consider. First, I want to clearly express that EQUITY is not at odds with GROWTH. In fact, for a vibrant and sustainable City, building with equity is the only way forward. We can grow Cincinnati and dismantle segregation. It's not an either/or proposition.
- We have to be smart, thoughtful and visionary in how we proceed. More of the same way of thinking and implementing existing policies will not reverse the unacceptable course that we are currently on. It will only lead to a deeper crisis in housing in our communities of color. It is simply not enough.
- We must begin with transparency. This means having good tools to collect baseline data on what is currently being built and supported with City dollars and subsidies. Any good changes in policy on incentives will be dependent on a strong understanding of what is being produced now and where the gaps are that need to be incentivized. Transparency, for our communities, council, and all taxpayers.
- There is broad agreement on the need for more funding/ investment in affordable housing. So let's commit to establishing a dedicated revenue source to fund what working class residents need - affordable homes. The dedicated source is key in the success of any initiative and municipalities across the country have found a way to do this. We can too.
- As departments hire new staff, prioritize bringing on people with expertise in equity so the administration's skill set matches the moment we are in as a city and they can meet community needs.
- See community residents and organizations as assets, not adversaries. We have been living in this City, developing our communities and have deep expertise about development processes, including its negative impacts. We are well positioned to create solutions.
- As you look at this issue, articulate clear goals for the annual production of affordable units at particular levels of affordability to meet the community need.
- Affordable housing and livable wage jobs are two sides of the same coin. We can't say that businesses can't afford to pay livable wages, but as a City we will subsidize businesses to build housing that no working class residents in our City can afford. We have to invest in both.
- Please remember that if we want to attract investment in our communities and in affordable housing specifically, as City leaders, you have to make a large scale financial commitment to show leadership and get others to do the same. You have the power and the support of the community to do this now.

Thank you for your time today,

Jennifer Summers

Peaslee Neighborhood Center Director